

REPAIRING THE CRIPPLES.

QUEER CONTRIVANCES FOR STRENGTHENING THE HUMAN FRAME.

Apparatus that are in Constant Demand by Old and Young—Implement for the Use of Morphine Popular—Secrets from Behind the Footlights—Dealing with the Devil.

"Now that your little boy is fixed all right, don't you want something in my line for yourself?"

"No, I do not. I am perfectly sound."

"You may think so, but it would let me hunt you over. I've no doubt I should find that you need some sort of apparatus. Eight out of every ten men who walk the streets of New York wear some mechanical appliance or other, and women too, for that matter, though they look so fine," said the proprietor of a manufacture of surgical instruments and appliances for the relief and remedy of numerous physical ailments and defects. The walls, showcases, tables, and windows of the salesroom were covered and filled by queerly shaped and mysterious contrivances of steel, nickel, celluloid, wood, gold, brass, leather, tin, chink, silk, rubber, and seemingly of every other material that could be moulded, carved, sowed, hammered, cut, filed, and bent to fit some part of the human anatomy or do some thing terrible to some refractory or defective member. Among them were electric bolts, chains, medals, girdles, bracelets, necklaces, and hair brushes. There were all sorts of artifices needed in sick rooms. There were many strange contrivances for the relief of paralyzed persons. One, called the dynamometer, or paralytic register, is a steel instrument which is placed in the patient's hand in order to test his power of moving his fingers. There were many instruments and apparatuses for spine and hip diseases, and for extending the limbs of cripples. There was a very queer arrangement in which the sufferer lies on his back.

In the showcases there was stock valued at \$5,000, consisting mainly of surgical instruments. In showing these and explaining their uses, the proprietor said: "We do a large business in the sale of syringes for hypodermic injections of morphine."

"To physicians mostly?"

"Oh, no, by no means; the sale is comparatively small to them. The general use of opium is a growing evil, and more women than men are addicted to it. Those who have become accustomed to it cannot live without it. The relief it gives from pain is instantaneous, but it lasts only two or three hours.

We sell the hypodermic syringe to persons in every state of life, from the cradle to the grave. Her carriage, to the poor handress with a basket of linen on her arm. How so wide a knowledge of the subcutaneous application of morphine can be? I am not surprised. I am a loss to conjecture, but even young school misses make use of it. One girl will tell her companions, and they will come to her and press her to purchase instead.

The sum she receives is not great, but, although it is always either their sick aunt or grandmother who sent them, they say. A gentleman one day rushed in here pale, haggard, shivering, and evidently ill. He had been suffering with delirium tremens. He had broken the needle of his hypodermic syringe, and wanted it replaced. He could hardly walk, and was supported by a chair. He was admitted into an adjoining room, and in a few moments returned calm, smiling, and composed. He had injected his subcutaneous dose, and was now in perfect command of himself.

I have lately come to have instruments repaired who were in such a state of nervous excitement that they could not leave their carriages, and the instrument had to be arranged in the greatest hurry, and taken to the nearest office of a physician.

In one corner of the store stood a plaster cast taken from the upper portion of a young girl's body. It slightly resembles a corpse, and was intended to give a picture of the spine. I infer from the immovable number of trusses I see, that rapture is not uncommon."

"It is very common," the proprietor replied. "Physicians are continually obliged to be physiotherapists to the patients who strain and injure themselves by violent exercise. The great majority of circus performers are ruptured. Children, too, are prone to accidents, in running, climbing, and jumping, especially by children, but not so easily cured after maturity.

We have an endless variety of trusses. Each physician has his own plan of a truss, and we are always making something new after physicians' directions. Then there are many men who only invent new apparatus of their own, and then there are those who invent. As in the case of the sewing machine, somebody is always getting out new attachments. The man can run up to a hundred or more of them, and get out another, stronger, and need support for weak ankles and knees and back, and so on. Who are the purchasers of the new back supports? Those figure in such profusion in your stock?"

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There are also all those elastic bands, stockings, heel and toe pieces, armlets, waistbands, &c. &c."

They are for two kinds of people—those who desire to look some better dressed, and for those who wear them to enhance their personal appearance."

"Are not the two contradictory?"

"Not so, for the improvement of the figure have apparatus to gird in the waist and to hold back the shoulders and throw out the chest. Thighs are almost equally developed, and the legs are not so stout, neither in this city who do not wear some sort of mechanical support to other."

A gentlewoman recently brought his son in for a truss. She said he had been riding through the city, and on such a short time, that she could not require such a strong and gaudy article as a truss, expressed his wonder that I could make a living at such a business. There was something odd in his manner, however, and I asked him if he himself stood in need of some of my wares, and I questioned him as to whether he did not feel more comfortable when he sat with his feet up, and his hands behind his head. He said that the bottom of his trousers had caused me what was the matter with him. I said, "varicose veins, and, though I had been in the business twenty years, I had never seen a man who needed elastic stockings more than he did. He bought a pair, and, after walking about the store a little, he declared that he had not got so comfortable in his clothes as when he had them on. Who are the purchasers of the new back supports? Those figure in such profusion in your stock?"

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